

Cambourne Town Council

South Cambridgeshire District Council report: Tuesday 7th June 2022

Councillor Stephen Drew
Councillor Helene Leeming

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We are both very proud to have been elected to serve the people of our town on the district council for the period May 2022 to May 2026 in the elections of Thursday 5th May 2022, and look forward to working closely with the town council to further the interests of our fellow residents.

Although we do not have any major information to report at this stage in terms of district council actions, plans or decisions relevant to Cambourne during May we would like to inform the council of what we have been doing in our first four weeks as councillors, as well as some information regarding the council's work to support Ukrainian refugees coming to be hosted by people in Cambourne. There is also information related to the next stages of the C2C project.

1) Road safety at the Vine School

Following contact made with us by a parent at the school we have engaged with parents and the school's leadership team to understand and seek resolutions to the significant problems that occur each morning and afternoon outside the school. Cllr Drew visited the school to see the problems for himself on Monday 16th May, and Cllr Leeming met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher on Monday 23rd May for a site visit. We have liaised with County Councillor Howell and will work collaboratively to support the school to find solutions.

2) Road crossing outside Uplands Place

Following the town council meeting on Tuesday 17th May where residents and councillors held further discussions about the issue of the slow progress towards the delivery of the proposed predestination crossing, we noted the suggestion that the developers were no longer required to provide the crossing that was originally part of the planning consent. Cllr Drew contacted the South Cambs planning team to ask for clarification on this and has been told that the requirement for a crossing has indeed been discharged due to the apparent provision of "pedestrian refuges" as the volume of pedestrians is insufficient to warrant a crossing being installed. Cllr Drew has requested a further meeting with Stephen Kelly, Chief Planning Officer, to discuss this and will report back for the council in due course.

3) Anti-social behaviour in Cambourne

Cllr Drew attended the meeting held in the new Cambourne Soul youth building on Friday 20th May, which was well attended by both adult and youth residents of the town. Cllr Leeming has joined the South Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership and will be using her position there to push for increased police actions in Cambourne as well as funding and support for youth services and young people generally in

our town. Cllr Drew has volunteered to work with the youth workers to increase the opportunities for young people in our town to use the new building's facilities on Friday and Saturday nights.

4) Cambourne Village College

On Wednesday 25th May, Cllr Drew attended an event where 15 year 10 students at CVC made presentations about topics of their choice at the end of an eight week course on political engagement. These young people talked about a range of topics related to social and natural justice, and our town can most certainly be proud of our young people's engagement with political and social issues. The proposed development by the town council of a Cambourne Youth Council is something that we would be keen to support and based on hearing our young people speak we can be confident of its success.

Cllr Drew also had a discussion with Claire Coates, CVC Principal, regarding access issues at the college. This is something that we know the town council has already discussed and had a presentation from Ms Coates on. Cllrs Drew and Leeming will be meeting again with the principal in the next week to discuss this further so that we can fully understand the issues from the college's perspective which will enable us to do all we can to work for the needs of our community.

5) Ukrainian refugees in Cambourne

The arrival of Ukrainian refugees in our town continues to gather pace. There is an active refugees support group amongst hosts who are working hard to share information and support each other to overcome the administrative and logistical difficulties that inevitably arise. Both Cllr Drew and Cllr Leeming are part of this group. A specific point that was raised recently in the group was the possibility of free membership of the gym facilities in Cambourne for Ukrainian refugees. We know that the town council is keen to support hosts and refugees in our community, and would like this to be considered as part of any support the council is able to give. We know that Ukrainians have been given constant support and welcome from communities and councils across Europe as they travel to the UK. This has included accommodation, meals and access to local facilities such as leisure centres as they have travelled.

SCDC has a team of 50 staff members who are working to support the arriving refugees and host families, and we can be proud of the fact that South Cambridgeshire has the largest number of host families under the Ukrainian Refugees Scheme of any non-metropolitan district council / authority in the UK. SCDC has also used its powers under the scheme to enhance the welcome payment to refugees from £200 to £350 using the funds provided to it by the government.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/support-for-ukraine/ukraine-family-scheme/>

6) Starship robots in Cambourne

Like almost all (or so it seems) of Cambourne's residents, we are very excited and pleased to see the arrival of the Starship robots that are currently trundling their way around our town delivering groceries from the Coop in Upper Cambourne.

We were informed of this plan in advance by the county council, and provided with key information regarding how it works and how it has become a feature of life for residents in other places such as Milton Keynes. We hope that the project is successful and that this new scheme can offer a further enhancement of services for our residents.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities-localism/food-delivery-robots-in-cambridgeshire>

7) Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport and Active Travel Environmental Impact Assessment - Public Consultation

The Greater Cambridge Partnership has launched the next stage of the work towards bringing the benefits of the Cambourne to Cambridge busway to our community. Support for the C2C scheme in Cambourne is abundantly clear from the over 1500 residents that Cllr Drew and Cllr Leeming have spoken to in the last twelve months. The pressing need for improved transport connections with Cambridge for work, education and leisure will be substantially met by the building of the busway. We strongly support its construction as being what the residents of our town need and deserve to have in place.

The new consultation runs until 11th July, and we would encourage residents and all interested groups in our town to take part. The clearer and louder our collective voices are in relation to this project the more likely it is to be brought to completion by the currently proposed date of 2026.

<https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/c2c-eia-2022>



General South Cambridgeshire District Council information:

1) Property Investment produces early payback

When we took over the running of the council four years ago, the Lib Dem Group inherited a financial deficit leading to a requirement to generate income. This was to supplement the shrinking central government's grant payments, which almost entirely disappeared.

This led us to develop a property investment plan, and we purchased several commercial buildings, largely on the science and technology parks. These were, in large part, responsible for the generation of £5m per year additional income.

One of those properties has very recently been sold on, after a very attractive, unsought bid was received, for around double the purchase price just 15 months later. This has added over £10m to the Council's coffers, and provides us with a very strong financial foundation, for the next few years.

2) Energy Council Tax Rebate Scheme

The government's council tax rebate scheme went live on 1st April. It is aimed at homes in council tax bands A-D. The amount of £150 will not show up on your Council Tax bill.

The first energy rebate payments are now being issued. On Friday 29 April nearly 22,000 payments were made by BACS, totalling just over £3 million.

These first payments are being made to those who paid their April Council Tax instalment via Direct Debit, and where the bank details held match the names of those liable to pay the Council Tax charge. In addition to the main scheme, payments are also being made from the local scheme, which extended eligibility into the higher council tax bands for those in receipt of Local Council Tax Support, Disabled Band Relief or where certain exemptions apply. The local scheme also provides an additional £25 to those in bands A-D in receipt of Local Council Tax Support. Full details of the schemes can be found here: [£150 Energy Rebate - South Cambs District Council \(scams.gov.uk\)](http://£150 Energy Rebate - South Cambs District Council (scams.gov.uk)). Payments for those residents that paid their council tax by Direct Debit on 23rd April will be made in the next few days.

For those that do not pay their Council Tax by Direct Debit, or where the bank account name details that we hold do not match the names of those liable to pay Council Tax, a short form will be published on the website soon for residents to provide their bank details for payment. The Government requires that we undertake additional verification checks prior to payment, and so these will take a little longer to process. We are currently looking at how best to support those that may be digitally excluded, and if there are any concerns these should be directed to energyrebate@scams.gov.uk. We will be offering the option to have the rebate paid directly to the Council Tax account should residents prefer, and a separate form will be available on the website soon for residents to complete should they wish.

3) Fitness and Wellbeing Grants

South Cambridgeshire District Council is urging instructors to apply for up to £300 to lead fitness and wellbeing activities in their communities.

Anyone who leads an existing group or who wants to set up a new initiative in the District, such as leading a walking group in their local park or running a weekly yoga class in a village hall, could be eligible for the small grant. Providers running multiple groups can also apply to fund multiple programmes.

Activities could range from walking football/rugby/netball, to chair-based exercise classes, diabetes walking groups, yoga for the over 60s, baby yoga classes or more.

The grant, which is funded by Cambridgeshire County Council, is to help deliver physical activity programmes provided by the District Council in partnership with Living Sport. It is designed to cover costs such as venue hire for up to six weeks, with new participants being entitled to four free sessions. Once the free sessions are complete, participants would be expected to begin paying a small fee to continue participation, meaning that the initiative should become a sustainable source of income for the instructor.

3) Zero Carbon Award - Application Deadline Extended

South Cambridgeshire District Council has been recognised for its work to tackle climate change, with a Silver accolade at the 2022 Public Sector Transformation Awards. The Council's Green to our Core programme is supported by its Zero Carbon Strategy and Doubling Nature Strategy.

Highlights of the Council's approach include Greening South Cambridgeshire Hall with a £1.8M energy efficiency retrofit to include a ground source heat pump, solar carport, upgraded lighting and other elements.

We were one of the first Councils to adopt a fully electric refuse collection vehicle with more on the way, and we are developing a solar farm to power the lorries.

We've upgraded 1,800 street lights with low energy bulbs and awarded £314,415 to 51 different community groups to support carbon reduction projects including setting up E-Bike schemes, installing infra-red heating panels in community buildings, holding sustainable food festivals, tree planting, energy efficient lighting and waste reduction.

We have extended the deadline of the Zero Carbon Communities Grant Scheme and will now be receiving applications until 5pm on 17th June. We are welcoming applications for two categories: Carbon Emission Reduction or Locking up Carbon, and Engaging the Community on Climate Change. Projects could include energy efficiency improvements for community buildings, a large-scale tree planting project, funding for an Eco Festival or campaign, or encouraging active, sustainable travel. More information, and guidance on how to apply, is available on our website here. If you have any questions, please contact zcc@scambs.gov.uk . Please share this information with groups who might be interested.